

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 OMB-01 NIC-01 SAJ-01 DRC-01 /135 W

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R 251919Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6364

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 2298

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CH, VS

SUBJECT: FRENCH POSITION CONCERNING PARACELS AND SPRATLEYS

1. QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR ASIA (INDOCHINA) BOLLE TOLD EMBOFF THAT THE CHINESE HAD CALLED ON QUAI DIRECTOR FOR ASIA FROMENT-MEURICE JANUARY 23 TO PRESENT THE TWO PRC STATEMENTS (JANUARY 11 AND 20) CONCERNING CHINESE POSITION ON THE PARACELS AND THE RECENT CONFLICT THERE WITH THE GVN. THE CHINESE WERE UNABLE TO ANSWER THE FRENCH QUESTIONS WITH ANY PRECISION, INDICATING THAT THEY HAD RECEIVED LITTLE OTHER THAN THE OFFICIAL NOTES AND THE NCNA REPORTS.

2. ON JANUARY 24 THE GVN AMBASSADOR CALLED ON FROMENT-MEURICE TO ASK FOR FRENCH SUPPORT FOR INSCRIBING THE PARACELS PROBLEM ON THE AGENDA OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL. FROMENT-MEURICE SAID THE GOF WOULD REFLECT ON THE GVN REQUEST. (BOLLE COMMENTED THAT PRESS REPORTS THAT FRENCH UN REP HAD INSTRUCTIONS TO ABSTAIN WERE ERRONEOUS.) THE GVN AMBASSADOR ALSO ASKED
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THE GOF TO OPEN UP ITS ARCHIVES TO ASSIST THE GVN

IN PREPARING ITS CASE ESTABLISHING VIETNAMESE SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE PARACELS. FROMENT-MEURICE SAID THAT THE REQUEST MERITED REFLECTION. BOLLE COMMENTED TO EMBOFF THAT WHILE FRANCE MIGHT MAKE CERTAIN DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE GVN, IT WOULD NOT BE EASY TO OPEN UP THE FRENCH ARCHIVES. FRENCH EMBASSY IN SAIGON HAD SAID ITS FILES WERE COMPLETELY DISORDERED; FILES IN FRANCE ARE IN BETTER ORDER, BUT ARE DEPOSITED IN SEVERAL PLACES.

3. BOLLE SAID THAT GOF TOOK BASICALLY THE SAME VIEW AS DID THE US; THE CONFLICTING CLAIMS WERE VERY COMPLICATED AND FRANCE HOPED THE MATTER COULD BE SOLVED PEACEFULLY. BOLLE SAID GOF CONSIDERED THAT AS THE "PROTECTING" POWER OF INDOCHINA FOR A PERIOD OF YEARS, IT HAD AT THAT TIME ESPOUSED THE VIEWS OF THE ANNAMITE EMPIRE, WHICH HAD CONTINUALLY HELD THAT PARACELS AND SPRATLEYS WERE VIETNAMESE TERRITORY. BOLLE SAID THAT GOF WAS IN THE PROCESS OF STUDYING THE VARIOUS CLAIMS AND THOUGHT THAT THERE WOULD NEVER BE A CLEAR CASE. WORLD COURT DECISIONS PROVIDED LITTLE GUIDANCE FOR A LEGAL "RULING" FAVORING ONE SIDE OR ANOTHER. GOF IS VERY RELUCTANT TO TAKE ANY POSITION ON THE DISPUTE.

4. BOLLE ASKED WHETHER THE US HAD SEEN ANY INDICATION THAT THE PRC WAS PREPARING TO MOVE MILITARILY TOWARD THE SPRATLEYS. EMBOFF SAID THAT THERE WERE NO INDICATIONS OF A CHINESE MOVE TO DATE OF WHICH HE WAS AWARE. BOLLE ASKED WHETHER THE US TOOK THE SAME POSITION CONCERNING THE SPRATLEYS AS THE PARACELS. EMBOFF SAID OFFICIAL US STATEMENTS HAD INDICATED WE VIEWED THE TWO ISLAND GROUPS AS PRESENTING SIMILAR PROBLEMS, BUT WE WOULD INQUIRE CONCERNING OFFICIAL POSITION.

5. ACTION REQUESTED: IF THERE IS AN OFFICIAL US POSITION ON THE SPRATLEYS WHICH DEPARTMENT WISHES US TO CONVEY TO GOF, WE WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING IT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETING AGENDA, TERRITORIAL CLAIMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 JAN 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: kelleyw0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974PARIS02298
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740115/aaaaanxg.tel
Line Count: 107
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: kelleyw0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <29 APR 2002 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <30-Sep-2002 by kelleyw0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FRENCH POSITION CONCERNING PARACELS AND SPRATLEYS
TAGS: PFOR, CH, VS, FR, UNSC, QUAI
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005